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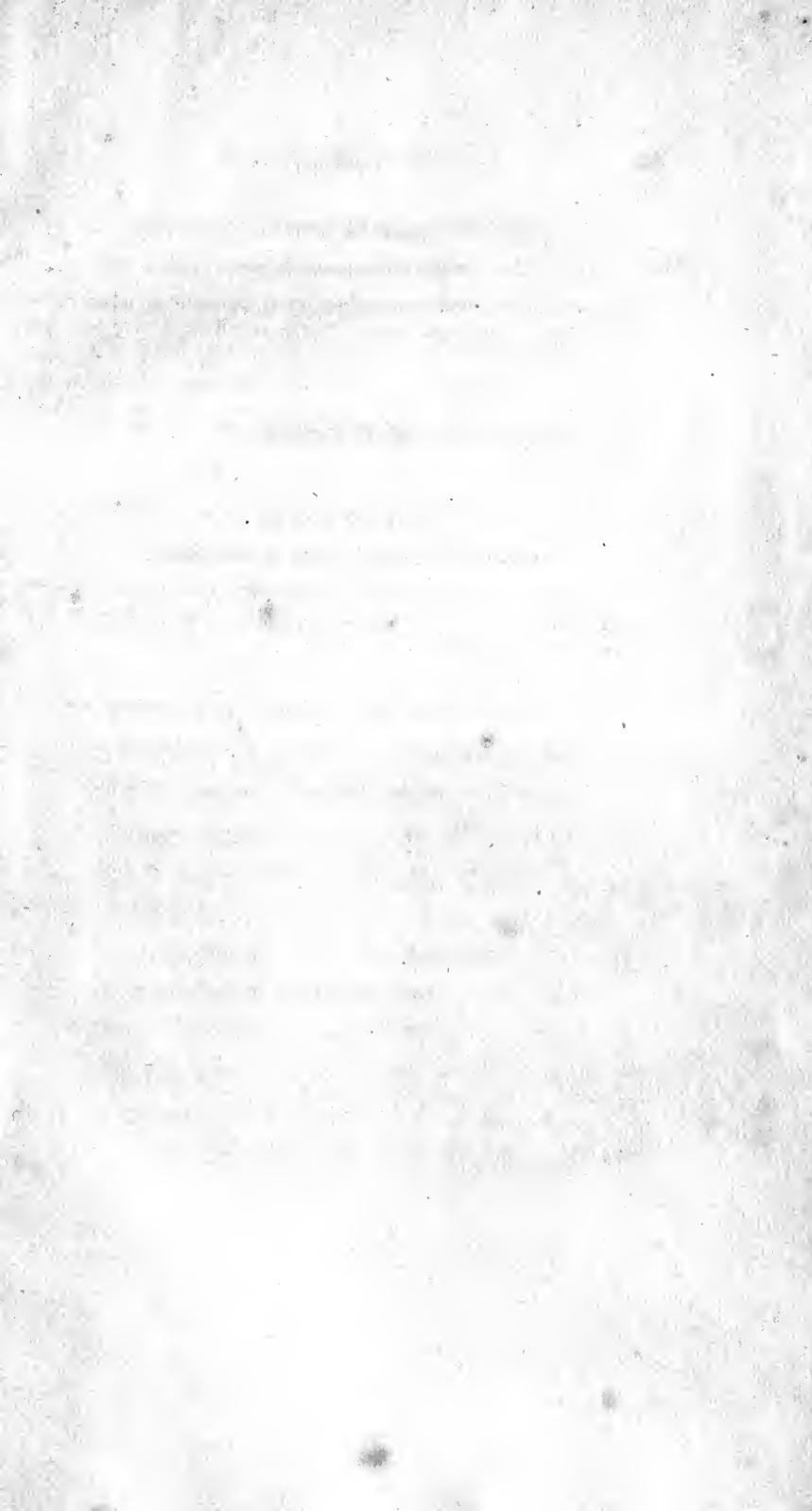
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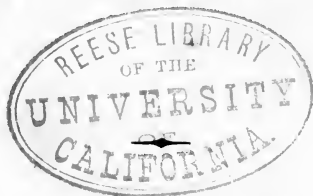
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SKETCHES:

BY N. P. WILLIS.

‘—————If I remember,
You loved such stories once, thinking they brought
Man to a fine and true humanity.’

BARRY CORNWALL.



BOSTON:
S. G. GOODRICH, 141, WASHINGTON ST.

MDCCCXXVII.

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, to wit:

District Clerk's Office.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the thirtieth day of November, A. D. 1827, in the fiftysecond year of the Independence of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *N. P. Willis*, of the said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit: 'SKETCHES. By N. P. Willis.

"———If I remember,

You loved such stories once, thinking they brought
Man to a fine and true humanity."

BARRY CORNWALL.'

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;' and also to an act entitled 'An act supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.'

JNO. W. DAVIS, { *Clerk of the District of
Massachusetts.*

28090

BOSTON: PRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

Stephen Foster, Printer.

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TO
MY FATHER

THIS VOLUME

IS

RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

IN introducing this volume to the Public, the Author would simply remark, that it was written at different periods of a college life, which has just expired; (the Scripture Sketches at a very early part of it.) He has no intention of screening its faults, either of feeling or style, beneath his 'score of summers;' but as prefaces are the fashion, he has thought the mention of the fact would not be amiss in the promotion of a proper understanding between himself and his readers.

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SKETCHES.

THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM.

MORN breaketh in the east. The purple clouds
Are putting on their gold and violet,
To look the meeter for the sun's bright coming.
Sleep is upon the waters and the wind;
And nature, from the tremulous forest leaf
To her majestic master, sleeps. As yet
There is no mist upon the deep blue sky,
And the clear dew is on the blushing bosoms
Of crimson roses, in a holy rest.
How hallowed is the hour of morning! meet,
Aye, beautifully meet, for the pure prayer.

The patriarch standeth at his tented door,
With his white locks uncovered. 'Tis his wont

To gaze upon the gorgeous orient;
And at that hour the awful majesty
Of one who talketh often with his God,
Is wont to come again and clothe his brow
As at his fourscore strength. But now he seemeth
To be forgetful of his vigorous frame,
And boweth to his staff as at the hour
Of noontide sultriness; and that bright sun!
He looketh at its pencilled messengers,
Coming in golden raiment, as if light
Were opening a fearful scroll in heaven.
Ah! he is waiting till it herald in
The hour to sacrifice his much loved son!

Light poureth on the world. And Sarah stands,
Watching the steps of Abraham and her child
Along the dewy sides of the far hills,
And praying that her sunny boy faint not.
Would she have watched their path so silently,
If she had known that he was going up,
Even in his fair-haired beauty, to be slain
As a white lamb for sacrifice? They trod
Together onward, patriarch and child;
The bright sun throwing back the old man's shade,
In straight and fair proportions, as of one

Erect in early vigor. He stood up
Firm in his better strength, and like a tree
Rooted in Lebanon, his frame bent not.
His thin, white hairs, had yielded to the wind,
And left his brow uncovered; and his face,
Impressed with the stern majesty of grief,
Nerved to a solemn duty, now stood forth
Like a rent rock, submissive, yet sublime.
But the young boy, he of the laughing eye
And ruby lip, the pride of life was on him.
He seemed to drink the morning. Sun and dew,
And the aroma of the spicy trees,
And all that giveth the delicious East
Its fitness for an Eden, stole like light
Into his spirit, ravishing his thoughts
With love and beauty. Every thing he met,
Floating or beautiful, the lightest wing
Of bird or insect, or the palest dye
Of the fresh flowers, won him from his path;
And joyously broke forth his tiny shout,
As he flung back his silken hair, and sprung
Away to some green spot or clustering vine,
To pluck his infant trophies. Every tree
And fragrant shrub was a new hiding-place,
And he would crouch till the old man came by,

Then bound before him with his childish laugh,
Stealing a look behind him playfully,
To see if he had made his father smile.

The sun rode on in heaven. The dew stole up
Like a light veil from nature, and the heat
Came like a sleep upon the delicate leaves,
And bent them with the blossoms to their dreams.
Still trod the patriarch on with that same step,
Firm and unfaltering, turning not aside
To seek the olive shades, or lave his lips
In the sweet waters of the Syrian wells,
Whose gush hath so much music. Weariness
Stole on the gentle boy, and he forgot
To toss his sunny hair from off his brow,
And spring for the light wings and gaudy flowers,
As in the early morning; but he kept
Close by his father's side, and bent his head
Upon his bosom like a drooping bud,
Lifting it not, save now and then to steal
A look up to the face whose sternness awed
His childishness to silence.

It was noon;
And Abraham on Moriah bowed himself,

SKETCHES.



And buried up his face, and prayed for strength.
He could not look upon his son and pray;
But with his hand upon the clustering curls
Of the fair, kneeling boy, he prayed that God
Would nerve him for that hour. Oh! man was made
For the stern conflict. In a mother's love
There is more tenderness; the thousand cords
Woven with every fibre of her heart,
Complain, like delicate harp strings, at a breath;
But love in man is one deep principle,
Which, yielding not to lighter influence,
Abides the tempest. He rose up, and laid
The wood upon the altar. All was done.
He stood a moment, and a vivid flush
Passed o'er his countenance; and then he nerved
His spirit with a bitter strength, and spoke:
'Isaac! my only son!' The boy looked up,
And Abraham turned his face away, and wept.
'Where is the lamb, my father?' Oh! the tones,
The sweet, the thrilling music of a child!
How it doth agonize at such an hour!
It was the last, deep struggle. Abraham held
His loved, his beautiful, his only son,
And lifted up his arm, and called on God—
And lo! God's Angel stayed him; and he fell
Upon his face and wept.

ABSALOM.

THE waters slept. Night's silvery veil hung low
On Jordan's bosom, and the eddies curled
Their glassy rings beneath it, like the still
Unbroken beating of the sleeper's pulse.
The reeds bent down the stream. The willow leaves,
With a soft cheek upon the lulling tide,
Forgot the lifting winds; and the long stems,
Whose flowers the water, like a gentle nurse,
Bears on its bosom, quietly gave way
And leaned in graceful attitudes to rest.
How strikingly the course of nature tells,
By its light heed of human suffering,
That it was fashioned for a perfect world!

King David's limbs were weary. He had fled
From far Jerusalem, and now he stood
With his faint people for a little rest
Upon the shore of Jordan. The light wind

Of morn was stirring, and he bared his brow
To its refreshing breath; for he had worn
The mourner's covering, and he had not felt
That he could see his people until now.
They gathered round him on the fresh green bank,
And spoke their kindly words; and as the sun
Rose up in heaven, he knelt among them there,
And bowed his head upon his hands to pray.
Oh! when the heart is full, when bitter thoughts
Come crowding thickly up for utterance,
And the poor common words of courtesy
Are such a very mockery, how much
The bursting heart may pour itself in prayer!
He prayed for Israel; and his voice went up
Strongly and fervently; he prayed for those
Whose love had been his shield; and his deep tones
Grew tremulous; but oh! for Absalom!
For his estranged, misguided Absalom—
The proud, bright being who had burst away,
In all his princely beauty, to defy
The heart that cherished him—for him he poured,
In agony that would not be controlled,
Strong supplication, and forgave him there
Before his God, for his deep sinfulness.

The hosts were numbered. At Mahanaim's gate
Sat David, as the glittering thousands passed
Forth to the battle. With a troubled eye
He looked upon their pomp, and as the helms
Bent low before him, and the banners swayed
Like burnished wings to do him reverence,
His look grew restless, and he did not wear
The lofty sternness of a monarch's brow.
The leader of the host came by. His form
Was like a son of Anak, and he strode
Majestically on, and bore his crest
As men were waters, and his frame a rock.
The king rose up to Joab, and came near,
As his tall helm was bowed; and by the love
He bore his master, he besought him there
That he would spare him Absalom alive.
He passed with his stern warriors on; the trump
And the loud cymbal died upon the ear;
And as the king turned off his weary gaze,
The last faint gleam had vanished, and the wood
Of Ephraim had received a thousand men,
'To whom its pleasant shadows were a grave.

The pall was settled. He who slept beneath
Was straightened for the grave; and as the folds

Sunk to the still proportions, they betrayed
The matchless symmetry of Absalom.
His hair was yet unshorn, and silken curls
Were floating round the tassels as they swayed
To the admitted air, as glossy now
As when in hours of gentle dalliance bathing
The snowy fingers of Judea's girls.
His helm was at his feet; his banner, soiled
With trailing through Jerusalem, was laid
Reversed beside him; and the jewelled hilt,
Whose diamonds lit the passage of his blade,
Rested like mockery on his covered brow.
The soldiers of the king trod to and fro,
Clad in the garb of battle, and their chief,
The mighty Joab, stood beside his bier
And gazed upon the dark pall stedfastly,
As if he feared the slumberer might stir.
A slow step startled him. He grasped his blade
As if a trumpet rang; but the bent form
Of David entered, and he gave command
In a low tone to his few followers,
And left him with his dead. The king stood still
Till the last echo died; then throwing off
The sackcloth from his brow, and laying back
The pall from the still features of his child,

He bowed his head upon him, and broke forth
In the resistless eloquence of woe.

‘Alas! my noble boy, that thou shouldst die!
Thou, who wert made so beautifully fair!
That death should settle in thy glorious eye,
And leave his stillness in this clustering hair!
How could he mark thee for the silent tomb,
My proud boy, Absalom!

‘Cold is thy brow, my son! and I am chill
When to my bosom I would try to press thee;
How was I wont to feel my pulses thrill,
Like a rich harp string, yearning to caress thee,
And hear thy sweet “My Father!” from these dumb
And cold lips, Absalom!

‘The grave hath won thee; I shall hear the gush
Of music and the voices of the young;
And life will pass me in the mantling blush,
And the dark tresses to the soft winds flung;
But thou no more with thy sweet voice shalt come
To meet me, Absalom!

‘And oh! when I am stricken, and my heart
Like a bruised reed is waiting to be broken;

How will its love for thee, as I depart,
Long for thine ear to catch its dying token!
It were so sweet, amid death's gathering gloom,
To see thee, Absalom!

'And now farewell! 't is hard to give thee up,
With death so like a gentle slumber on thee.
And thy dark sin—oh! I could drink the cup,
If from this woe its bitterness had won thee—
May God have called thee like a wanderer home,
My erring Absalom!'

He covered up his face, and bowed himself
A moment on his child; then giving him
A look of melting tenderness, he clasped
His hands convulsively, as if in prayer;
And as a strength were given him of God,
He rose up calmly, and composed the pall
About him decently, and left him there
As if his rest had been a breathing sleep.

HAGAR IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE morning broke. Light stole upon the clouds
With a strange beauty. Earth received again
Its garment of a thousand dies; and leaves,
And delicate blossoms, and the painted flowers,
And every thing that bendeth to the dew,
And stirreth with the daylight, lifted up
Its beauty to the breath of that sweet morn.

All things are dark to sorrow; and the light
And loveliness, and fragrant air were sad
To the dejected Hagar. The moist earth
Was pouring odors from its spicy pores,
And the young birds were caroling as life
Were a new thing to them; but oh! it came
Upon her heart like discord, and she felt
How cruelly it tries a broken heart,
To see a mirth in any thing it loves.
She stood at Abraham's tent. Her lips were pressed

Till the blood left them; and the wandering veins
Of her transparent forehead, were swelled out,
As if her pride would burst them. Her dark eye
Was clear and tearless, and the light of heaven,
Which made its language legible, shot back
From her long lashes, as it had been flame.
Her noble boy stood by her with his hand
Clasped in her own, and his round, delicate feet,
Scarce trained to balance on the tented floor,
Sandaled for journeying. He had looked up
Into his mother's face until he caught
The spirit there, and his young heart was swelling
Beneath his snowy bosom, and his form
Straightened up proudly in his tiny wrath,
As if his light proportions would have swelled,
Had they but matched his spirit, to the man.

Why bends the patriarch as he cometh now
Upon his staff so wearily? His beard
Is low upon his breast, and his high brow,
So written with the converse of his God,
Beareth the swollen vein of agony.
His lip is quivering, and his wonted step
Of vigor is not there, and though the morn
Is passing fair and beautiful, he breathes

Its freshness as it were a pestilence.
Oh! man may bear with suffering; his heart
Is a strong thing, and godlike in the grasp
Of pain that wrings mortality; but tear
One cord affection clings to, part one tie
That binds him to a woman's delicate love,
And his great spirit yieldeth like a reed.

He gave to her the water and the bread,
But spoke no word, and trusted not himself
To look upon her face, but laid his hand
In silent blessing on the fair-haired boy,
And left her to her lot of loneliness.

Should Hagar weep? May slighted woman turn,
And as a vine the oak hath shaken off,
Bend lightly to her tendencies again?
Oh no! by all her loveliness, by all
That makes life poetry and beauty, no!
Make her a slave; steal from her rosy cheek
By needless jealousies; let the last star
Leave her a watcher by your couch of pain;
Wrong her by petulance, suspicion, all
That makes her cup a bitterness—yet give
One evidence of love, and earth has not

An emblem of devotedness like hers.
But oh! estrange her once, it boots not how,
By wrong or silence, any thing that tells
A change has come upon your tenderness—
And there is not a high thing out of heaven
Her pride o'er-mastereth not.

She went her way with a strong step and slow;
Her pressed lip arched, and her clear eye undimmed,
As it had been a diamond, and her form
Borne proudly up, as if her heart breathed through.
Her child kept on in silence, though she pressed
His hand till it was pained; for he had caught,
As I have said, her spirit, and the seed
Of a stern nation had been breathed upon.

The morning past, and Asia's sun rode up
In the clear heaven, and every beam was heat.
The cattle of the hills were in the shade,
And the bright plumage of the Orient lay
On beating bosoms in her spicy trees.
It was an hour of rest; but Hagar found
No shelter in the wilderness, and on
She kept her weary way, until the boy
Hung down his head, and opened his parched lips

For water; but she could not give it him.
She laid him down beneath the sultry sky;
For it was better than the close, hot breath
Of the thick pines, and tried to comfort him;
But he was sore athirst, and his blue eyes
Were dim and bloodshot, and he could not know
Why God denied him water in the wild.
She sat a little longer, and he grew
Ghastly and faint, as if he would have died.
It was too much for her. She lifted him
And bore him farther on, and laid his head
Beneath the shadow of a desert shrub;
And shrouding up her face she went away,
And sat to watch, where he could see her not,
Till he should die—and watching him she mourned:—

‘God stay thee in thine agony, my boy!
I cannot see thee die; I cannot brook
Upon thy brow to look,
And see death settle on my cradle joy.
How have I drunk the light of thy blue eye!
And could I see thee die?

‘I did not dream of this when thou wast straying,
Like an unbound gazelle, among the flowers;

Or wearing rosy hours,
By the rich gush of water-sources playing,
Then sinking weary to thy smiling sleep,
So beautiful and deep.

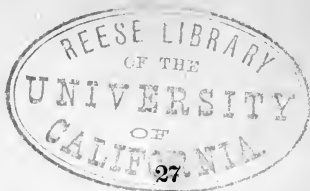
'Oh no! and when I watched by thee the while,
And saw thy bright lip curling in thy dream,
And thought of the dark stream
In my own land of Egypt, the deep Nile,
How prayed I that my fathers' land might be
An heritage for thee!

'And now the grave for its cold breast hath won thee,
And thy white, delicate limbs the earth will press;
And oh! my last caress
Must feel thee cold, for a chill hand is on thee.
How can I leave my boy, so pillowed there
Upon his clustering hair!'

She stood beside the well her God had given
To gush in that deep wilderness, and bathed
The forehead of her child until he laughed
In his reviving happiness, and lisped
His infant thought of gladness at the sight
Of the cool plashing of his mother's hand.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

SHE stood before her father's gorgeous tent,
To listen for his coming. Her loose hair
Was resting on her shoulders, like a cloud
Floating around a statue, and the wind,
Just swaying her light robe, revealed a shape
Praxiteles might worship. She had clasped
Her hands upon her bosom, and had raised
Her beautiful, dark, Jewish eyes to heaven,
Till the long lashes laid upon her brow.
Her lip was slightly parted, like the leaves
Of a half-blown pomegranate; and her neck,
Just where the cheek was melting to its curve,
With the unearthly beauty sometimes there,
Was shaded as if light had fallen off,
Its surface was so polished. She was quelling
Her light, quick breath, to hear; and the white rose
Scarce moved upon her bosom as it swelled,
Like nothing but a wave of light in dreams,



SKETCHES.

To meet the arching of her queenly neck.
Her countenance was radiant with love.
She looked like one to die for it; a being
Whose whole existence was the pouring out
Of rich and deep affections. I have thought
A brother's and a sister's love was much.
I know a brother's is, for I have loved
A trusting sister; and I know how broke
The heart may be with its own tenderness.
But the affection of a delicate child
For a fond father, gushing as it does
With the sweet springs of life, and living on
Through all earth's changes like a principle,
Chastened with reverence, and made more pure
By early discipline of light and shade,—
It must be holier!

The wind bore on
The leaden tramp of thousands. Clarion notes
Rang sharply on the ear at intervals;
And the low, mingled din of mighty hosts
Returning from the battle, poured from far,
Like the deep murmur of a restless sea.
They came, as earthly conquerors always come,
With blood and splendor, revelry and woe.

The stately horse treads proudly ; he hath trod
The brow of death, as well. The chariot wheels
Of warriors roll magnificently on ;
Their weight hath crushed the fallen. Man is there ;
Majestic, lordly man, with his serene
And elevated brow and godlike frame,
Lifting his crest in triumph, for his heel
Hath trod the dying like a wine-press down !

The mighty Jephthah led his warriors on
Through Mizpeh's streets. His helm was proudly set,
And his stern lip curled slightly, as if praise
Were for the hero's scorn. His step was firm,
But free as India's leopard ; and his mail,
Whose shekels none in Israel might bear,
Was lighter than a tassel on his frame.
His crest was Judah's kingliest, and the look
Of his dark, lofty eye and terrible brow,
Might quell the lion. He led on ; but thoughts
Seemed gathering round which troubled him. The veins
Upon his forehead were distinctly seen ;
And his proud lip was painfully compressed.
He trod less firmly ; and his restless eye
Glanced forward frequently, as if some ill
He dared not meet, were there. His home was near ;

And men were thronging, with that strange delight
They have in human passions, to observe
The struggle of his feelings with his pride.
He gazed intensely forward. The tall firs
Before his tent were motionless. The leaves
Of the spiced aloe, and the clustering vines
Which half concealed his threshold, met his eye
Unchanged and beautiful; and one by one,
The balsam with its sweet-distilling stems,
And the Circassian rose, and all the crowd
Of silent and familiar things, stole up
Like the recovered passages of dreams.
He strode on rapidly. A moment more,
And he had reached his home; when lo! there sprang
One with a bounding footstep, and a brow
Like light, to meet him. Oh! how beautiful!
Her dark eye flashing like a sun-lit gem,
And her luxuriant hair—'t was like the sweep
Of a swift wing in visions! He stood still,
As if the sight had withered him. She threw
Her arms about his neck; he heeded not.
She called him 'Father,' but he answered not.
She stood and gazed upon him. Was he wroth?
There was no anger in that bloodshot eye.

Had sickness seized him? She unclasped his helm,
And laid her white hand gently on his brow,
And the large veins felt stiff and hard like cords.
The touch aroused him. He raised up his hands
And spoke the name of God in agony.
She knew that he was stricken, then, and rushed
Again into his arms, and with a flood
Of tears she could not bridle, sobbed a prayer
That he would tell her of his wretchedness.
He told her, and a momentary flush
Shot o'er her countenance; and then the soul
Of Jephthah's daughter wakened, and she stood
Calmly and nobly up, and said "'T is well—
And I will die!'

The sun had well nigh set.
The fire was on the altar, and the priest
Of the High God was there. A wasted man
Was stretching out his withered hands to heaven,
As if he would have prayed, but had no words;
And she who was to die—the calmest one
In Israel at that hour—stood up alone
And waited for the sun to set. Her face
Was pale, but very beautiful; her lip

Had a more delicate outline, and the tint
Was deeper; but her countenance was like
The majesty of angels!—The sun set,
And she was dead, but not by violence.

IDLENESS.

It was a leisure day, and I had shut
My door upon intrusion, and set down
With a true book to read. My study fire
Made music to my ear; the placid brow
Of my Madonna, and the shadowy tints
Of an old Flemish picture that I keep,
Might pass for company; and for relief
To weary eyes, a sweet geranium stood
In the half shuttered window, breathing out
Its odors with the pleasant smell of books;
And a soft landscape, given me by one
Who has a noble nature, hung in light,
Serving me as a ground for poetry.

I read a tale of Séville. It was when
Darkness was over Spain, and Christian hearts
Were standing out for truth, undauntedly.
The daily light brought martyrdom, and men

Of a pure life went faithfully to die,
 For the rich hope hereafter. There was set
 A scaffold on the 'golden Gaudalquivir ;'
 And in the greenest valley of the land,
 With its bright shore and water tempting them
 Like an affection, did they meekly die.
 Nobles as just men perished, where their sires
 Held the chivalric tournament ; and one
 Whose ancestors had been Castilia's kings,
 Died calmly. He had loved to come alone
 And watch that stealing river, and 't is told
 That when the axe fell frequently, he went
 Ever at evening there, that he might look
 Upon its bloody evidence, and nerve
 His spirit to the trial.

'T is a tale

Of high and manly fortitude, and one
 To elevate the nobler nature. I
 Have told it to defend my idle time,
 And prove that a companionship with books
 Betters the spirit, and that gliding back
 Upon these by-past histories reveals
 Perfect example, and may teach sometimes,
 How noble and how beautiful appears
 The finer temper of humanity.

DREAMS.

‘ I know it is dark ; and though I have lain
Awake, as I guess, an hour or twain,
I have not once opened the lids of my eyes,
But I lie in the dark, as a blind man lies.’

COLERIDGE.

AND what is it to dream ? It is to have
A spiritual being. ’T is to loose
Th’ unsleeping mind from matter, and believe
Miraculous and godlike gifts our own.
It is to touch all nature with the wand
Of faery, and be true and beautiful
Amid a truer and more beautiful world.
It is to need no contrast that the light
About us may be visible, and joy
Mistaken not for sorrow. ’T is to love
Dark eyes, and tones like a *secondo* flute,
And then be irresistible ; and living
In a sweet granite home, to find your love
The angel that she seemed in poetry.

And what is it to dream? It is to know
The talisman of motion, and soar on
To the high places of the upper air,
Like a superior spirit. 'T is to glide
Out upon chainless wanderings, unchecked
By time, or distance, or the circumstance
Of waking reason. 'T is to weave long years
Of a still, midnight hour, or crowd a life
Into a glowing moment; and amid
The measure and the harmony that float
About us like an element, to find
Ithuriel's whisper—but a breakfast bell!

There's purity in dreams. The passions lie,
With the dull qualities of earth, asleep;
And the low interests of life are changed
For the etherial vision. We erase
Dark feelings with fantastic incident;
And feel cool fingers laid upon the brow
Where the hot flush is burning. We retrace
All early time in dreams; and hear the low,
Deep cadences of prayer, and press the hand
That led us to our happy slumbers then.
We look on riper seasons with the eye
That painted them all sunshine, and forget

That we have found them shadows; and we trust
Life's broken reed as lightly, and repeat
Our first young vow as movingly, again.
Such dreams refresh the feelings, like a pure
And high communion; for the spirit wears
No fetter of a poor, particular world,
And waits no cold and selfish reasoning,
To measure out its fervor; but goes back
Upon the purer memories, and lives o'er
The brighter past, alone; and when the heart
Hath buried an affection, it unclothes
Its image from the drapery of the grave,
And wins it to its olden tenderness.

I've read of one in story, who had laid
His young love in the grave. The seasons came
And went, like shadows over him, for years;
And then the world grew brighter, and he heard
A melody in nature's goings on;
And a sweet cousin's voice, that tempted him
Into the sunshine and the air, became
The music of his happiness, and so
He married her. One night she was awake,
And gazing on his features as the moon
Shone through the casement on them. A large tear

Stole from his eye, and as his lips were stirred
With the low murmur of his dream, she caught
The name of the departed. He awoke,
And she reproached him tearfully for love
Kept secret in his heart; and then he kissed
Her tears away, and told her that his love
Was faithfully her own, although in dreams
An angel came to him sometimes, and woke
A buried thought of one as beautiful.

OCTOBER.

‘————— To the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering the whole spirit.’

COLERIDGE.

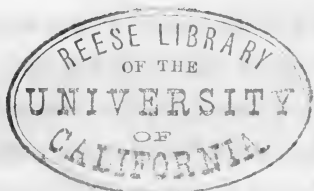
SUMMER has pleasant seasons, and the spring
Comes gaily on the senses; and 't is sweet
To know the places of the shadiest trees,
And hunt the scented violet; but when these
Have mellowed into autumn, and the flowers
Sleep in their fragrant places, 't is to me
A pleasanter and purer time to give
Close thought to its forgetfulness, and stray
By the serenest wave and greenest grass.

October had come in and I went forth
To breathe an air like June, and feel the nerve
Of the elastic temper which a frost
Gives to the sunshine. The transparent veil
Of morning's exhalations had rolled up

Into white, silvery streakings, and the sky
Looked perfectly and deeply blue between,
Like a fixed element, and birds went up
And sang invisibly, the heavenly air
Wooed them above the earth so temptingly.
I never knew the streams so musical,
Or saw them half so clear; and for the leaves—
The maples were just turned, and brighter trees
Were never by the forest pencil drawn.
The hill-sides seemed to slumber, the warm sun
Shone on their slopes so softly; and I knew
One that was carpeted with moss, and leant
To the warm south so fitly, you would look
To find Endymion sleeping. 'T was indeed
A pleasant place, and when I came to it
And told her, (did I say I was alone?)
That it was faery all, and only made
For her own lovely rest, she laughingly
Proclaimed herself a queen, and with the leaves
Bound her transparent temples for a crown,
And bade me kneel, and she would grant my boon
To half her fairy kingdom.

Could I paint
Her picture then! paint her voluptuous lip,

With its sweet curl of pride; the shaded eye
In its dark liquid lustre; the fair brow
With its light wandering veins, and raven braid
Contrasting with its whiteness; the faint blush
Upon her cheek, of maiden modesty,
And the rich outline, melting into grace,
Of her unmatched proportions; over all,
Could I but make the picture eloquent
With the deep, reedy music of her tone,
Or lend to you the golden leaf which bears
The sketch within my memory, you would know
How fairer than the summer, or the spring,
Should the October season seem to me.



BOYHOOD.

'I was a boy ; and she was fair
As you are when you smile,
And her voice came forth like the summer air,
With a tone that did beguile,
And her two blue eyes refreshing were
As two trees on an Indian isle.'

ETONIAN.

I LOVE fresh feelings—it is so unlike
This olden world to meet them ; and they come
Upon my heart like music so, or like
Some passage that is new in poetry.

I walked one eve by moonlight. I had seen
Some fourteen summers, and my cyphering
Was all the thought I had ; and as the world
Had come to me so pleasantly, I took
A wayward temper for my manual,

And kept it to the letter: It was now
A mellow eve of summer, and a girl,
Who laughed forever like the birds and had
Long eyelashes and very dangerous eyes,
Was leaning on my arm. I did not know
I was in love; but it seemed natural
To think of all she said, and she'd a way
Of coming to one's dreams; and then her name
Was always in the lesson like a word,
And half the time I studied it. This eve
We had been very gay, and I had watched
The deep, half shaded dimple in her cheek,
Till I forgot to answer; and as she
Of too much mirth grew serious, I began
To act the lover playfully. My cap
Was carelessly thrown back, and on my cheek
I shook some dew for tears, and as she curled
Her lip in mimic scorn, I knelt to her,
And begged for her sweet favor, touchingly.
She answered coldly first, and then relented,
As wiser maids have done; but with a look
Of something so like earnest, that I did
Her hand some violence; and then she blushed
And said I must not tell, but ladies' lips,
By some, were counted prettier.

The moon

Shone just as soberly, and I went home
And kept the secret; but I do not know
That she would let me touch the seal again.

NIGHT SKETCHES.

‘ ———Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember ———.’

WORDSWORTH.

I.

I HAVE been gay tonight. The perfect moon
Is sitting up in heaven, and living stars
Are looking sweetly from the firmament;
All elements that live, and common things
In earth and sea tonight are beautiful;
And there is stillness, fitting for pure thought,

And light for waking dreams, and holiness
Like a plain language written on the front
Of this exceeding temple—and yet I
Have been among the dancers, and have trod
The measures of a merry instrument.

I knew it as I went; for I was met
By a pure reach of moonlight that came down
Between the city walls, and I went back
A moment to regard its silver brow,
And list its gentle lesson; but a sound
Of music and of thrilling voices came
From the half opened window, and the laugh
Of a remembered girl bewilderingly
Came over me, and I forgot the moon
As if I never knew it was in heaven.

'Tis strange—for I am very happy now
While leaning in her light, and I could glide
Most sweetly to the sleep of pleasant dreams
Beneath her stilly influence—but I know
That if a voice I think of were to come
And call me now, my own ungente name
(Her melting lip!) would seem more beautiful.

II.

How secret are the goings on of night!
The moonlight is not heard; and as the leaves
Are touched by slumber, they bow gently down
Without a rustle, and the stealthy dew
Comes on them like the spirit of a dream.
The daily heat departs; the unquiet pulse
Of nature grows serener, and the wave
Of motion in all growing things is still,
While coolness circulates unheard, and rest
Steals like a feeling on the animal world.

So still art thou, O night! and yet thy voice
Hath many tones to listen, and it tells
To my unquiet wakefulness, how deep
The wisdom that has fashioned thee so well—
A beautiful and fitting time of rest.

III.

MIDNIGHT ON THE ST LAWRENCE.

Give me my cloak! It is no night for sleep,
And I will wear a vigil with the stars
Until the break of morning. What a scene!

The orient is all molten with the light
Of a perfected moon, and in the west
The deep blue tints look cool, and every star
Is drawn distinctly on the sheet of heaven.
The winds are wholly still, and as we pass,
Breaking the shadows of the many trees
That sleep upon the margin, or go in
Among the graceful windings of the stream,
We seem like wizards, turning into waves
The very sky—it sleeps so perfectly.
The vesper bells are hushed, but I can see
The glitter of the steeples on the hills
That swell up from the shore, and heavenly
As is the face of nature, they come in
Among her features like a pleasant smile,
The thought of worship is so beautiful.

Swiftly, yet gently on! How human things
Are sometimes like a witching vision, fair!
And how the cunning of diviner skill
Can mingle up the elements, to make
A fallen world like heaven! I am made
Subject to ills, and erringly at best
May use my faculties; but I am here
With God's best work about me, and a mind

Humbly, but purely to the harmonies
Of nature tuned, the only looker on
In all this lovely paradise of light.
Blessed we sometimes are! and I am now
Happy in quiet feelings; for the tones
Of a most pleasant company of friends
Were in my ear but now, and gentle thoughts
From spirits whose high character I know,
Were spoken at the rising of the moon,
And I retain their influence, as the air
Retains the softness of departed day.
And so I should be happy; and while joy
Is with me, I will bless my company
Of sleeping friends, and if their eyes should rest
Upon this page hereafter, they will know
That in the history of my lonely hours
Some gentler passages were writ by them.

TWILIGHT.

‘———When the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart.’

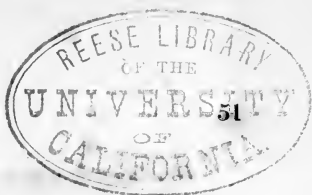
WORDSWORTH.

O TWILIGHT hour! who art so very cool
And balmy in the summer eventide,
With thy rich breathing quieting the winds,
And the uneasy waters; twilight hour!
Whose mantle is the drapery of dreams,
And who hast ever been in poetry
Life's holy time; thou who wert wont to steal
Upon us, as thy sandals were of dew!
How sadly comes the rustle of thy step,
In the decaying season of the year!

My early fire is low, and hurrying feet
In the short pauses of the wind go by,
And the unquiet leaves, that sighingly
Obey its gusty summons and sweep on,
Seem mourning for the green and pleasant trees;

And the clouds wear sad colors, and I feel
As there were nothing in this fading world,
That is not cold and sorrowful like this.
Thus is it with a spirit not at ease.
It turns no eye within; but, as it were
The mirror of the world's poor circumstance,
It takes its hue from nature, as if earth
With its discordant elements could tune
The delicate harmonies of human mind.
We have within us fountains, and they flow
With fancy to create the beautiful,
And thought to search out knowledge, and deep love
To link us to society; light mirth
To gladden, and kind sympathies to shade
The spirit; and yet many will go out
With a sealed bosom wandering the world,
To satisfy a thirst for happiness.
How strange it is, that when the principle
Of light is living in us, we should shut
Its emanations in, and darkly stray
To catch a beam from nature, like a star
That should forget its glory and go out,
Because the moon was shining not in heaven!

SKETCHES.



DAWN.

'That line I learned not in the old sad song.'

CHARLES LAMB.

'THROW up the window! 'T is a morn for life
In its most subtle luxury. The air
Is like a breathing, from a rarer world;
And the south wind seems liquid—it o'ersteals
My bosom and my brow so bathingly.
It has come over gardens, and the flowers
That kissed it are betrayed; for as it parts
With its invisible fingers my loose hair,
I know it has been trifling with the rose,
And stooping to the violet. There is joy
For all God's creatures in it. The wet leaves
Are stirring at its touch, and birds are singing
As if to breathe were music, and the grass
Sends up its modest odor with the dew,
Like the small tribute of humility.
Lovely indeed is morning! I have drank

Its fragrance and its freshness, and have felt
Its delicate touch, and 't is a kindlier thing
Than music, or a feast, or medicine.

I had awoke from an unpleasant dream,
And light was welcome to me. I looked out
To feel the common air, and when the breath
Of the delicious morning met my brow,
Cooling its fever, and the pleasant sun
Shone on familiar objects, it was like
The feeling of the captive who comes forth
From darkness to the cheerful light of day.
Oh! could we wake from sorrow! Were it all
A troubled dream like this, to cast aside
Like an untimely garment with the morn!
Could the long fever of the heart be cooled
By a sweet breath from nature, or the gloom
Of a bereaved affection pass away
With looking on the lively tint of flowers—
How lightly were the spirit reconciled
To make this beautiful, bright world its home!

SCRAPS FROM A JOURNAL.

I.

My heart is like a sleeping lake
Which takes the hue of cloud and sky,
And only feels its surface break
When birds of passage wander by,
Who dip their wings and upward soar,
And leave it quiet as before.

Thus change comes on me. If the light
Of the gay sun is drank by clouds,
And dulness sleeps upon the bright,
Clear garniture whose greenness shrouds
The naked nature; if the creep
Of lazy rain-clouds tells alone
Earth does not on its axle sleep,
And winds go over with a moan
Like birds wing-broken; if the sea
Looks like an agitated pall,
And sullied foam heaves mournfully,

And pitches from the dull green wall
Of waters; if the wild fowl rise

From the cold ocean with a splash,
And heavily wheel up the skies,

As if they would forget the dash
Of billows, and could pass away

From earthly sorrows as from earth;
If not one shorn, but sunny ray,

Leaps out like a stray thought of mirth;
If heaven looks sad, and seas look dull,

And nature's beauty is a blank—
I feel as if my heart were full

Of waters from oblivion drank;
For I forget, like flowers, the hue
Of beauty, without sun and dew.

But a bright morning—when the lark

Is painted on the light blue sky,
And vapors rest upon the dark,

Deep pools of ebony that lie
In the hill shadows; when the leaves

Are stirring with the scented air,
And the bright drops that evening weaves

Like diamonds in the wavy hair
Of nature, glisten; when the wing

Of the light wind is but a shrine
On which the lowliest flower may fling
Its gift of odors; when the vine
Hath lifted its coarse leaf to show
Its azure clusters to the sun,
And quickened by his amorous glow,
The curling shoots stir one by one;
When every fibre, blade, and stem
That lifteth to the arch of blue,
Is jewelled with its droplet gem,
And every bathed and dainty hue
Hath a clear April freshness; when
The birds go caroling like streams
O'er pebbly courses, and the glen
Reechoes patiently the themes
A thousand summers and their birds
Have given in those very words;
When every nerve is nobly strung,
And leaping pulses swiftly pass,
And care is from the spirit flung
Like rain-drops from the swaying grass—
I feel as if my spirit took
From nature a new gift of sight,
And I could read her living book
By perfect and immediate light,

And knew, as angels know, how broad
Is the benevolence of God.

II.

It is a glorious morning. Storm
Hath left no traces, and the warm,
Rich sunshine cometh like a strain
Of parted music, back again.
The trees are bare, but like a true
And changeless friend, the sun shines through,
And round the sad and fallen leaves
His mesh of light he softly weaves.
I see and feel how very fair
This summer sun, and breezes are ;
I see the white, thin vapors wreathed
About the hills as if they breathed ;
I see the sky's pure, delicate blue,
Like a soft eye which melts me through,
And I've remembered the sweet eyes
I likened to those gentle skies,
And gazed this hour as if their look
Were written in that azure book,
And the long echo came but now
Of my hot speech and silly vow.
I cannot wander ; but I know

How earth's deep voices softly flow ;
I know how light the waters run
O'er the sere grass and fretful stone ;
I know how fountains leap, how still
The winds creep over lake and hill ;
The Autumn birds, the last leaf-fall,
The morn's sweet breath—I know them all.

I know them all—and yet my feet
Are not where singing waters meet ;
My books are for the running streams,
And stupid schoolmen for the dreams
Of gentle spirits ; I am tied
While nature joyeth like a bride ;
Chained down to reason on the cool,
Dull precepts of a skeptic's rule,
While beauty over earth and sea
Is gushing as a fount let free.

It hath its lesson. Beautiful things
Are given like retreating wings ;
Not to be gathered, never won,
But sent to lead the spirit on ;
Winning the upward eye of prayer,
As 't were a finger pointing there,

Till we have followed to the sky
An angel, imperceptibly.

III.

It is a holy night. The moon
Hath made it like a gentler noon,
And every deep and starry eye
Is waking in the summer sky,
As if its light were made alone
For restless hearts to gaze upon.
There are no voices, and the stir
Of the soft south goes lightlier
Among the branches, and the deep,
Felt stillness of a world asleep,
Is on my spirit like the touch
Of a sweet friend who loveth much.
I've left my books. I cannot damp
My heart beside a weary lamp
While heaven is set with stars, and I
Am not to sit down quietly,
And on a musty altar fling
The birthright of a glorious wing.
Reason who will; while skies of June
Are molten by this silent moon,

While flowers have breath, and voices creep
From running brook and fountain-leap,
While any thing is left to love
In this fair earth and heaven above,
I would not wear a fettered limb
To make Chaldea's wisdom dim.

Why, what is duty? Sky and sea,
Thou promised heaven! are types of thee;
The earth is like a flowing cup
Of perfect beauty mingled up;
The very elements of heaven,
Life, light, and music, freely given;
The world an Eden, and we thirst
For every voice and fountain-burst;
And yet, we're told, at duty's call
We must forego—forget them all!

How has the foot of nature trod
The pathway of a perfect God,
How are the springs of earnest thought
With his diviner cunning wrought,
If all that makes us feel our fate
Not altogether desolate—
This burning love for beautiful things,

Is sealed among forbidden springs,
And we must throw a gift of fire
Aside like a neglected lyre?

BETTER MOMENTS.

My mother's voice! how often creeps
 Its cadence on my lonely hours,
 Like healing sent on wings of sleep,
 Or dew to the unconscious flowers!

I can forget her melting prayer
 While leaping pulses madly fly;
 But in the still unbroken air,
 Her gentle tone comes stealing by,
 And years, and sin, and manhood flee,
 And leave me at my mother's knee.

The book of nature, and the print
 Of beauty on the whispering sea,
 Give aye to me some lineament
 Of what I have been taught to be.
 My heart is harder, and perhaps
 My manliness hath drunk up tears,
 And there's a mildew in the lapse

Of a few miserable years—
But nature's book is even yet
With all my mother's lessons writ.

I have been out at eventide
Beneath a moonlight sky of spring,
When earth was garnished like a bride,
And night had on her silver wing;
When bursting leaves and diamond grass,
And waters leaping to the light,
And all that makes the pulses pass
With wilder fleetness, thronged the night—
When all was beauty—then have I,
With friends on whom my love is flung
Like myrrh on winds of Araby,
Gazed up where evening's lamp is hung,
And when the beautiful spirit there
Flung over me its golden chain,
My mother's voice came on the air
Like the light dropping of the rain,
And resting on some silver star
The spirit of a bended knee,
I've poured her low and fervent prayer
That our eternity might be

To rise in heaven like stars at night,
And tread a living path of light!

I have been on the dewy hills

When night was stealing from the dawn,
And mist was on the waking rills,

And tints were delicately drawn
In the gray east; when birds were waking

With a low murmur in the trees,
And melody by fits was breaking

Upon the whisper of the breeze—
And this when I was forth, perchance,
As a worn reveller from the dance!

And when the sun sprang gloriously
And freely up, and hill and river

Were catching upon wave and tree
The arrows from his subtle quiver—

I say a voice has thrilled me then,
Heard on the still and rushing light,

Or creeping from the silent glen,
Like words from the departing night—

Hath stricken me, and I have pressed
On the wet grass my fevered brow,

And pouring forth the earliest,
First prayer with which I learned to bow,

Have felt my mother's spirit rush
Upon me as in by-past years,
And yielding to the blessed gush
Of my ungovernable tears,
Have risen up—the gay, the wild—
As humble as a very child!

THE HINDOO MOTHER.

It was a gentle eve in Hindoostan.
The rains were past, and the delighted earth
Was beautiful once more, and glittering leaves
Were lifting lightly on their beaten stems,
And glancing to the pure, transparent sky,
Like a pleased infant smiling through its tears.
Clouds lingered in the west, and tints were drawn
By sunset fingers on their skirts of gold,
And they were floating as serenely there,
As if the children of the restless storm
Could sleep upon the azure floor of heaven.

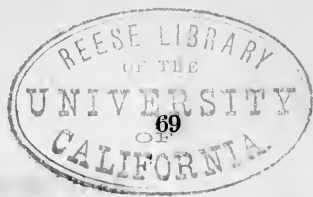
Deep ran the holy Ganges, for the rain
Had swollen it from Thibet to the sea.
Its flow was turbid; and, as if the winds
Were not forgotten by the multitude
Of its strange waters, they were leaping up,
And with a wonderful glory gathering
The mantle of the sunset over them.

How frequently these living passages
Of nature's book are opened, and how few
Are the high hearts that know them, and can feel
Their eloquence and beauty!

Meina stood
Upon the breathing carpet of the shore,
Gazing on sky and river. There was much
In the dark features of the young Hindoo,
That should have won a gentler history.
She had the Eastern eye, with its dark fringe
And shadowy depth of lustre; but, beyond
The elements of beauty, there was writ
A something that the wounded roe would trust
For shelter from its hunters. Her closed lips
Were delicate as the tinted pencilling
Of veins upon a flower; and on her cheek
The timid blood had faintly melted through,
Like something that was half afraid of light.
There was no slighter print upon the grass
Than her elastic step; and in her frame
There was a perfect symmetry, that seemed
Aerial as a bird's. It was the hour
For worship in her land; and she had come,
With the religion of a high, pure heart,

To bow herself in prayer. A darker mind
Might pray at such an hour; but she had caught
The spirit of the scene; and, as her eye
Followed the coursing of the golden waves,
Or rested on the clouds that slept above,
Like isles upon the bosom of the sea,
Her soul was swept to music like a harp,
And she knelt down in her deep blessedness
To worship the High Maker. As she prayed,
Her beautiful young boy—a very dream,
As he might be, of infant loveliness,
With his dark hair upon the summer wind,
And the sweet laugh of a delighted child
Like music on his lips—came leaping by,
And, flinging a light wreath upon her brow,
Sprang onward like a bounding antelope.
She turned a moment—might she not, for him?
Him, whom she cradled in the whispering tree,
And gathered to her bosom in the hush
Of the still night?—to know if he was there.
'T was but a moment, and she bowed again;
And, as the murmur of her silver tone
Stole out upon the wind, her images
Of majesty came back, and she was filled,
Like a deep channel by the whirlwind swept,

Again with the rich rushing of her prayer.
The shadows of the stealthy evening came
Silently on; but she was up, in thought,
Among the crystal palaces of light;
• And a still prompting came to her, to pray
That the poor spirit of a passing world,
With all its fond, but frail idolatries,
Might on the altar of her God be flung.
She breathed it, and along the holy shore
She heard the whisper of the waters creep:
'Thine is the victory, Meina!'—Was it won?
Won in its cold, bereaving cruelty?
Won from the pride of woman? from her love?
Won from thy boy! young mother? No! oh, no!
She had forgotten him! He was too young,
Too purely, beautifully young, to die!
And then the waves repeated to the shore,
And the light echo heard it: 'Give him up!'
And Meina heard it: 'Give him to thy God!'
And the strong heart arose! One arrowy pulse
Of an acuter agony than death;
One fearful shiver at the searching thrill,
And she had won—aye, with her glorious boy
Upon her very breast—the victory!



SKETCHES.

Oh! let the erring oftener be forgiven,
That, in the shadowy twilight of the mind,
They stray a little from the perfect way!
If there is evidence in silent leaves,
And the still waters, of a present God,
And all who hear not messages of grace,
Must gather from its dim and hidden words
Their better solaces; remember ye
Who reckon lightly of the poor Hindoo,
That, in the scattering of the leaves of life,
His page was written more imperfectly.

The beautiful sun arose, and there was not
A stain upon the sky; the virgin blue
Was delicate as light; and, as the east
Eclipsed night's pale and starry jewelry,
The pure intensity of noon stole on,
Like the soft deepening of a northern eye.

'Come! my own glorious boy!' and forth he sprang,
As he had been created of the morn
A spirit and an element of light.
'Come! Come!' and he was bounding airily
Beside his stately mother, laughing out
His lisping prattle of the promised boat,

As if her words had been in playfulness,
'That the bright waves should float him on to heaven.'
The morning mist stole up, as Meina knelt
To offer him to God. Her eyes were dim;
But her fine forehead, and her calm, still lip,
Were fearfully subdued; and as the cloud
Which clothes the lightning slumbers, so they slept.
Her soul was in its strength. She held her boy
Upon her bosom, till she felt the throb
Of his warm pulses numbered on her heart,
And her low, leaden cadences, kept on!
His silken hair, as delicately soft
As the light wind that stirred it, floated up,
As if to plead at her transparent cheek;
But she had wooed its kisses till it came
To be a fond idolatry, and now
She nerved her as the strong heart answered it.
And the low words broke severally on,
Distinctly as a common orison!
There is a period in the wreck of hopes
By the affections garnered, calmer far
Than an untried serenity. It comes
With the stern conflict ever, and awaits
The passage of that hour, as if the soul
Were girded, and had championed suffering;

And it is strange, how a weak human heart
Will thus be quiet like a hushing storm,
And, with a fetter on its pulses, wait
To measure spirits for the mastery!

The low 'Amen!' died on the silent air,
And Meina's heart was ready. The young boy
Sprang joyously away, as if her arms
Had prisoned him too long; and, as he saw
The painted boat heave lightly to the swell
Upon the reedy shore, and caught the breath
Of her wreathed helm of flowers, he gave a shout,
In his impatient gladness, and away,
Like a warm vision of aerial birth,
He bounded to implore that she would come.
Calmly and steadily came Meina on,
Led by her victim boy. The boat was there
Among the tall wet reeds, and she went in
And scanned its light frame over, and arranged
Its mimic ornaments; and then again,
When she had seen it all, and he had grown
Impatient, she began to note once more
The frailties in its lightly plaited reeds,
As if she did not know that it was meant
To kill. It is a wonderful effect

Of nature in the heart, that in the strength
Of a mistaken duty, it will turn,
And almost trifle with its tenderness,
As if it half misgave that all was wrong.

‘Come!’ and he sprang into his mother’s arms
With a light leap, and, scarcely faltering
In his gay laugh, he looked into her face,
And in a tone of fondness whispered her,
‘Will the boat bear, dear mother?’ She had quelled
Her feelings until now; had nerved herself
To the light grace with which he bounded by;
Had heard his voice, and looked upon his hair
In its light, breezy floatings, and had shut
Her heart up, with an iron thought, to all.
But this one doubt, half sadness as it came
From his delighted lips, and with his look
Of childlike and appealing confidence,
Was keener than a mother’s heart could bear!
She bowed her head, and struggled, as if life
Were bursting from its seal; and, as the thought
Rushed over her to take her idol back,
And keep him for her God, he murmured low,
‘And are you sure, my mother?’—‘No! my son!’
And the strong tide of nature gathered back

With a resistless energy. She clasped
 Her boy convulsively, and he had lived
 To quicken, in its gifted elements,
 The radiant spirit written on his brow,
 But a high strengthening she knew not of,
 Awakened her, and pressing down her lips
 In a long fervent kiss upon his cheek,
 She hushed him into peace, and lifting up
 Her face to heaven, she breathed the name of God,
 And laid him down—for ever!

The light bark

Went smoothly with the tide, and floated on
 Till his dark eye was scarcely visible.
 On, and yet on, she bounded! The bright waves
 Seemed playful in their leaping joyousness,
 And the curled ripple feathered at the prow
 Like a glad thing of life. Had death grown slow?
 Or were the waters 'stayed,' that they should keep
 Their cold embraces from him? On, still on,
 With her quick undulations! Hope revived
 In the sick heart of Meina, and she rose
 To gaze more keenly forward. He was there,
 And his small arms were lifted; and she thought
 That, as he tossed them upward, she could hear

A cadence of his sweet and silvery voice
Like a delighted shouting. It died off,
And then again she heard it. Was it joy
That broke upon her ear? oh! was there joy
In that long cry, thou mother? Hark to it!
'T is like the arrowy piercing of the wind!
He moveth, and she bade him to be still!
He riseth! 't is his boyish restlessness!
Look, Meina! Does he dash his little hands,
In mirth, upon the waters? Hark! once more!
'Mother!' He calls thee! Is thy child afraid?
Again! How very fearfully it comes!
'Help! Mother!' 'T is a cry of agony!
He sinks! Fly! Fly! he calls to thee! Oh fly!
'Mother!' God help thee! Dost thou see him now?

WAITING FOR THE HARVESTERS.

AND there she sat in ripened loveliness,
An English mother; joying in her babes,
Whose life was bright before her, and whose lips
Were breaking into language, with the sweet
And loving sentences they learn so soon.
Her face was very beautiful, and mirth
Was native on her lip; but ever now
As a sweet tone delighted her, the smile
Went melting into sadness, and the lash
Drooped gently to her eye, as if it knew
Affection was too chaste a thing for mirth.
It was the time for harvest, and she sat
Awaiting one. A breath of scented hay
Was in the air, and from the distance came
The noise of sickles, and the voices sent
Out on the stillness of the quiet morn;
And the low waters, coming like the strain
Of a pervading melody, stole in,
And made all music! 'T was a holiness

Of nature's making, and I lifted up
My heart to Heaven, and in my gladness prayed
That if a heart were sad, or if a tear
Were living upon earth, it might be theirs
To go abroad in nature, and to see
A mother and her gentle babes like these.

FUGITIVE PIECES.

REFERENCES

THE SOLDIER'S WIDOW.

Wo! for my vine-clad home!
That it should ever be so dark to me,
With its bright threshold, and its whispering tree!
That I should ever come,
Fearing the lonely echo of a tread,
Beneath the roof-tree of my glorious dead!

Lead on! my orphan boy!
Thy home is not so desolate to thee,
And the low shiver in the linden tree
May bring to thee a joy;
But, oh! how dark is the bright home before thee,
To her who with a joyous spirit bore thee!

Lead on! for thou art now
My sole remaining helper. God hath spoken,
And the strong heart I leaned upon is broken;
And I have seen his brow,
The forehead of my upright one, and just,
Trod by the hoof of battle to the dust.

He will not meet thee there
Who blest thee at the eventide, my son!
And when the shadows of the night steal on,
He will not call to prayer.
The lips that melted, giving thee to God,
Are in the icy keeping of the sod!

Aye, my own boy! thy sire
Is with the sleepers of the valley cast,
And the proud glory of my life hath past,
With his high glance of fire.
Wo! that the linden and the vine should bloom,
And a just man be gathered to the tomb!

Why, bear them proudly, boy!
It is the sword he girded to his thigh,
It is the helm he wore in victory!
And shall we have no joy?
For thy green vales, O Switzerland, he died!
I will forget my sorrow—in my pride!

THE BURIAL OF ARNOLD,

MEMBER OF THE SENIOR CLASS OF YALE COLLEGE.

YE 'VE gathered to your place of prayer
 With slow and measured tread;
 Your ranks are full, your mates all there;
 But the soul of one has fled.
 He was the proudest in his strength,
 The manliest of ye all;
 Why lies he at that fearful length,
 And ye around his pall?

Ye reckon it in days since he
 Strode up that foot-worn aisle,
 With his dark eye flashing vividly,
 And his lip wreathed with a smile.
 Oh! had it been but told you then
 To mark whose lamp was dim,
 From out yon rank of fresh-lipped men,
 Would ye have singled him?

Whose was the sinewy arm which flung

Defiance to the ring?

Whose laugh of victory loudest rung,

Yet not for glorying?

Whose heart, in generous deed and thought,

No rivalry might brook,

And yet distinction claiming not?

There lies he; go and look!

On now! his requiem is done;

The last deep prayer is said.

On to his burial, comrades! on,

With the noblest of the dead!

Slow! for it presses heavily;

It is a man ye bear!

Slow! for our thoughts dwell wearily

On the noble sleeper there.

Tread lightly, comrades! we have laid

His dark locks on his brow

Like life, save deeper light and shade;

We'll not disturb them now.

Tread lightly; for 't is beautiful,

That blue-veined eyelid's sleep,

Hiding the eye death left so dull;

Its slumber we will keep.

Rest now! his journeying is done;
Your feet are on his sod.
Death's chain is on your champion;
Here waiteth he his God!
Aye, turn and weep! 't is manliness
To be heart-broken here;
For the grave of earth's best nobleness
Is watered by the tear.

TO LAURA W——,

TWO YEARS OF AGE.

BRIGHT be the skies that cover thee,
Child of the sunny brow!
Bright as the dream flung over thee,
By all that meets thee now.
Thy heart is beating joyously,
Thy voice is like a bird's,
And sweetly breaks the melody
Of thy imperfect words.
I know no fount that gushes out,
As gladly as thy tiny shout.

Thy coral lip is pencilled well,
Thy cheek is deeply dyed;
Thine eye might shame the fleet gazelle,
In all his desert pride;
Thy fairy foot's uncertain step,
Thy light bewitching grace,

The smile that curls thy sleeping lip,
And lights thy radiant face;
Have made a gift of beauty up
Too fair to taste life's tainted cup.

I would that thou mightst ever be
As beautiful as now;
That time might ever leave us free
Thy yet unwritten brow!
I would life were all poetry
To gentle measures set,
That nought but chastened melody,
Might dim thine eye of jet,
Nor one discordant note be spoken,
Till God the cunning harp hath broken.

I would—but deeper things than these
With woman's lot are wove;
Wrought of intenser sympathies,
And nerved by purer love.
By the strong spirit's discipline,
By the fierce wrong forgiven,
By all that wrings the heart of sin,
Is woman won to heaven.

'Her lot is on thee,' lovely child!
God keep thy spirit undefiled!

I fear thy gentle loveliness,
Thy witching tone and air,
Thine eye's beseeching earnestness,
May be to thee a snare.
For silver stars may purely shine,
The waters taintless flow;
But they who kneel at woman's shrine,
Breathe on it as they bow.
Ye may fling back the gift again,
But the crushed flower will leave a stain.

What shall preserve thee, beautiful child!
Keep thee, as thou art now?
Bring thee, a spirit undefiled,
At God's pure throne to bow?
The world is but a broken reed,
And life grows early dim—
Who shall be near thee in thy need,
To lead thee up, to Him?
He who himself was 'undefiled'—
With Him we trust thee, beautiful child!

SONNET.

TO A PICTURE OF 'GENEVIEVE,' BY ALEXANDER.

THINE is a face to look upon and pray
That a pure spirit keep thee. I would meet
With one so gentle by the streams away,
Living with nature; keeping thy pure feet
For the unfingered moss, and for the grass
Which leaneth where the gentle waters pass.
The autumn leaves should sigh thee to thy sleep,
And the capricious April, coming on,
Awake thee like a flower, and stars should keep
A vigil o'er thee like Endymion;
And thou for very gentleness shouldst weep,
As dew of the night's quietness comes down.
I've praised thee, Genevieve! A dream of mine
Hath just such dark and shaded eyes as thine.

SONNET.

I HAVE been gazing on thee, Genevieve,
And musing, in my love, if thou must die;
And I have thought it were not well to grieve
At thy most delicate frame and lustrous eye;
For as a harp is broken, when the finger
That knew its cunning hath forgot to play,
Thou wouldst not, for that frail confinement, linger,
When it was time for thee to pass away;
And therefore am I glad, that when my heart
To thy enquiring tenderness is hushed,
And thine endearments from mine eyes depart,
'T will be enough for thee that life hath gushed,
Gently to loose the silver cord, and die,
And with me in my place of slumber lie.

SONNET.

I CARE not that the world, when I am dead,
Remember me; I care not that they come
To see the place where I shall lay my head,
Or praise me with low voices at my tomb;
I would not even a recording stone
Should tell them what I was—when I am gone.
There are a few who love me—whom I love—
Gentle and gifted spirits, who would weep,
But not that I had found a rest above,
And in their hearts my trifling virtues keep;
And one, whom I have folded like a dove
In my affections, would lie down and sleep
Softly beside me—and I should not care,
That any one should know that I was there.

EXTRACT FROM A POEM

DELIVERED AT THE DEPARTURE OF THE SENIOR CLASS OF

YALE COLLEGE, IN 1826.

WE shall go forth together. There will come
Alike the day of trial unto all,
And the rude world will buffet us alike.
'Temptation hath a music for all ears;
And mad ambition trumpeteth to all;
And the ungovernable thought within,
Will be in every bosom eloquent;
But when the silence and the calm come on,
And the high seal of character is set,
We shall not all be similar. The scale
Of being is a graduated thing;
And deeper than the vanities of power,
Or the vain pomp of glory, there is writ
Gradation, in its hidden characters.
The pathway to the grave may be the same,

And the proud man shall tread it, and the low,
With his bowed head, shall bear him company.
Decay will make no difference, and death
With his cold hand shall make no difference;
And there will be no precedence of power,
In waking at the coming trump of God;
But in the temper of the invisible mind,
The godlike and undying intellect,
There are distinctions that will live in heaven,
When time is a forgotten circumstance!
The elevated brow of kings will lose
The impress of regalia, and the slave
Will wear his immortality as free,
Beside the chrystal waters; but the depth
Of glory in the attributes of God,
Will measure the capacities of mind;
And as the angels differ, will the ken
Of gifted spirits glorify him more.
It is life's mystery. The soul of man
Createth its own destiny of power;
And as the trial is intenser here,
His being hath a nobler strength in heaven.

What is its earthly victory? Press on!
For it hath tempted angels. Yet press on!

For it shall make you mighty among men;
And from the eyrie of your eagle thought,
Ye shall look down on monarchs. Oh! press on!
For the high ones and powerful shall come
To do you reverence; and the beautiful
Will know the purer language of your brow,
And read it like a talisman of love!
Press on! for it is godlike to unloose
The spirit, and forget yourself in thought;
Bending a pinion for the deeper sky,
And in the very fetters of your flesh,
Mating with the pure essences of heaven!
Press on!—‘for in the grave there is no work,
And no device.’—Press on! while yet ye may!

So lives the soul of man. It is the thirst
Of his immortal nature; and he rends
The rock for secret fountains, and pursues
The path of the illimitable wind
For mysteries—and this is human pride!
There is a gentler element, and man
May breathe it with a calm, unruffled soul,
And drink its living waters till his heart
Is pure—and this is human happiness!
Its secret and its evidence are writ

In the broad book of nature. 'T is to have
Attentive and believing faculties;
To go abroad rejoicing in the joy
Of beautiful and well created things;
To love the voice of waters, and the sheen
Of silver fountains leaping to the sea;
To thrill with the rich melody of birds,
Living their life of music; to be glad
In the gay sunshine, reverent in the storm;
To see a beauty in the stirring leaf,
And find calm thoughts beneath the whispering tree;
To see, and hear, and breathe the evidence
Of God's deep wisdom in the natural world!
It is to linger on 'the magic face
Of human beauty,' and from light and shade
Alike to draw a lesson; 't is to love
The cadences of voices that are tuned
By majesty and purity of thought;
To gaze on woman's beauty, as a star
Whose purity and distance make it fair;
And in the gush of music to be still,
And feel that it has purified the heart!
It is to love all virtue for itself,
All nature for its breathing evidence;

And when the eye hath seen, and when the ear
Hath drunk the beautiful harmony of the world,
It is to humble the imperfect mind,
And lean the broken spirit upon God!

Thus would I, at this parting hour, be true
To the great moral of a passing world.
Thus would I—like a just departing child,
Who lingers on the threshold of his home—
Remember the best lesson of the lips
Whose accents shall be with us now, no more!
It is the gift of sorrow to be pure;
And I would press the lesson; that when life
Hath half become a weariness, and hope
Thirsts for serener waters, Go abroad
Upon the paths of nature, and when all
Its voices whisper, and its silent things
Are breathing the deep beauty of the world,
Kneel at its simple altar, and the God
Who hath the living waters, shall be there!

NOTES.

PAGE 32, LINES 12 and 13.

*'And a soft landscape given me by one
Who has a noble nature.'*

THE gentleman who gave me the picture of 'Stirling Castle' will not be surprised that so pleasant a gift holds a place in my memory.

PAGE 33, LINES 9 and 10.

*'one
Whose ancestors had been Castilia's kings.'*

This striking anecdote is related of Ponce de Leon, in, I think, 'A Visit to Spain,' by Michael Quin.

PAGE 47, LINE 12.

'The glitter of the steeples on the hills.'

Every one who has made the passage of the St Lawrence, will remember the beautiful effect of the steeples on the shore. Occupying almost every swell on the low interval, and tiled universally with tin, they glisten in the moonlight like turrets of silver. It is even in that majestic scenery an impressive and delightful feature.

PAGE 84, LINE 4.

'Child of the sunny brow.'

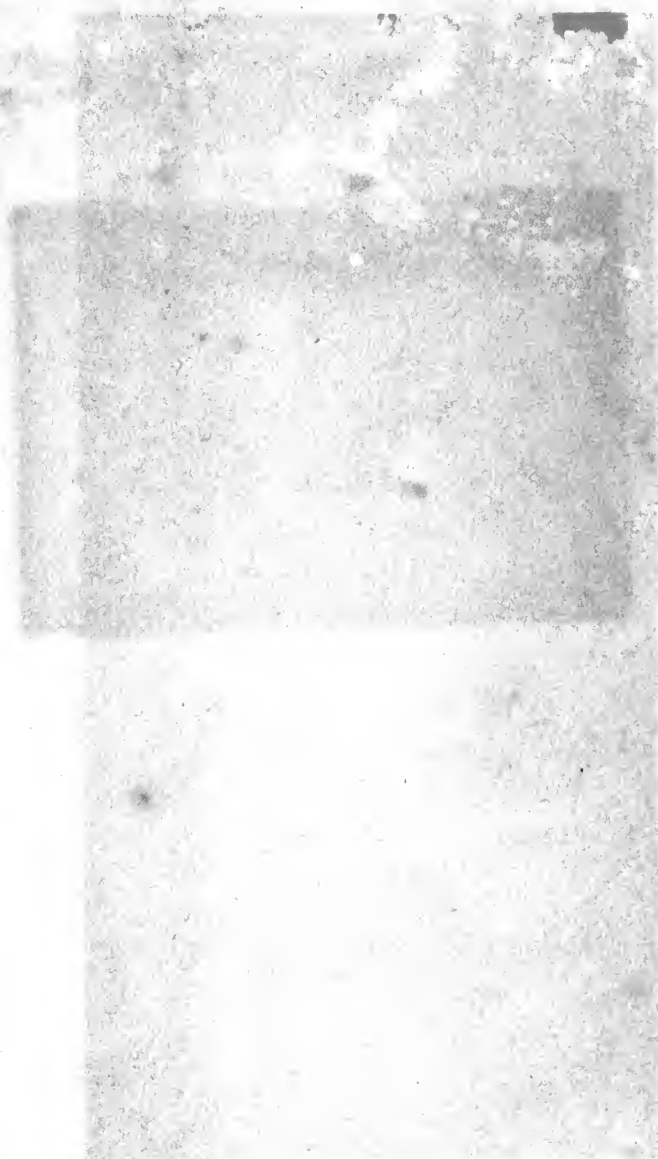
Perhaps my book will be forgotten before the child, to whom these lines are addressed, is old enough to understand them; but even if it is not, there is little harm in saying that she is at this time the most beautiful human being I ever saw. Her 'thousand winning ways' and graceful motion are before me now like a sweet dream, and I shall never forget them. May God bless her!

PAGE 87, LINE 14.

'As dew of the night's quietness comes down.'

If my readers have neglected meteorology as long as I did, the younger part of them at least, would like to be told that the dew never falls except on a still night.





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WILLIS' POEMS.

